

Northgate Primary School Trust

Audit Findings Report to Trustees following the audit to 31 August 2019

November 2019





Contents

Main report	Page
Introduction	2
Audit Approach	3
Summary of Income and Expenditure	5
Summary of Adjustments	6
Our Findings	7
Emerging Issues	13
Key dates 2019-20	17
Academy Helpdesk Twitter	18



Introduction

Introduction and Approach

This Report has been prepared for the Trustees of Northgate Primary School Trust and summarises our key findings in connection with the audit and assurance work carried out for the year ended 31 August 2019. We recognise that a copy of this Report is forwarded to the ESFA but it is not to be disclosed to any other person or organisation without our written permission. For the avoidance of doubt this Report should not to be posted on the Trust's website.

The scope of our work has already been communicated via our Audit Planning Report to the Trustees. The respective roles and responsibilities of both Price Bailey and the Trustees are set out in our agreed terms of engagement.

Our audit and assurance procedures have been designed to enable us to express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and the regular, proper and compliant use of public funds as set out in Annex B of the Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019.

We have reviewed our statement relating to independence detailed in the Audit Planning Report issued and can confirm we have remained independent and have appropriate safeguards in place. All staff comply with the Audit Practices Board Ethical Standards and the ICAEW Code of Ethics.

Executive Summary

At the time of issuing this Report (unless noted below) we anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion, without modification on the truth and fairness of information presented in the financial statements.

We also report that (unless noted below) no matters of irregularity, impropriety or non-compliance by virtue of value or nature underlying the accounts, have come to our attention that would lead to a modified conclusion in our Regularity Assurance Report.



Audit Approach

We adopted a risk based approach to the audit and our Audit Planning Report to the Trustees identified the following key risks to be addressed. Our detailed findings are noted as follows;

Risk Identified	Planned Approach	Work Done and Findings
Revenue recognition	We will verify all material streams of grant income reported to funding documentation. We will substantively test non grant income using analytical review based on our expectations and test a sample of entries for completeness where necessary. We will review post year income and cash movements to verify the completeness of income.	During the course of our audit work we documented the income systems and carried out procedures to gain assurance over the effectiveness of internal controls in place to prevent loss of income and ensure income is correctly recorded. We carried out work to ensure that the income in the accounts is materially complete and performed cut-off procedures to satisfy that income has been accounted for in the correct period. We have checked the income is appropriately recognised in accordance with the terms of any funding restrictions. No issues were found during the audit work.
Management override	We will gain an understanding of the systems, controls and procedures operating within the Trust finance function to identify potential areas of management override risk. We will review all journals posted throughout the year with a value greater than performance materiality. Any that have not been covered by our work on year end balances will be scrutinised and corroborated further.	We reviewed a sample of journals posted throughout the year and a sample from those posted at the year-end to assess appropriateness and validity. Explanations were sought for any large or unusual amounts. No issues were found during the audit work.



Audit Approach continued...

Risk Identified	Planned Approach	Work Done and Findings
Related parties	We will review procedures and controls surrounding the recording and reporting of related party transactions. We will make enquiries as to the existence of any related parties before reviewing accounting records and other trusteeships to ensure that all related party transactions have been reported in the financial statements.	We reviewed the internal procedures in place for identifying related parties, including the requirement to keep a register of Trustees business interests which is to be updated annually. Our audit work has provided assurance that the related party transactions disclosed in the financial statements are accurate and complete. No issues were found during the audit work.
Fund Allocation	We need to ensure that the allocation of funds between restricted and unrestricted has been correctly applied and that funds have been used for the purposes intended by the donor.	We examined whether income had been correctly categorised between restricted and unrestricted funds, reviewing any terms and conditions where applicable. We checked that expenditure had been allocated correctly to the corresponding income. No issues were found during the audit work.
Staff and salary costs	Staff costs are a key area due to the relative value compared to income reported. Our testing will focus on testing of existence of staff and accuracy of expenditure reported.	We reviewed the reconciliations of the payroll records with the disclosures in the financial statements to ensure no indication of material misstatement of wages and salaries. We tested a sample of the payroll system to ensure adequate and accurate recording and reporting of payroll information in the financial statements. Our testing included verification of a sample of employees to ensure they exist.
		No issues were found during the audit work.



Summary of Income and Expenditure

	Restricted General Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Sub Total	Fixed Asset Fund	Pension Reserve	Total
Incoming Resources	1,706,771	177,461	1,884,232	26,477		1,910,709
Resources Expended	(1,702,971)	(181,933)	(1,884,904)			(1,884,904)
LGPS Charge			-		(161,000)	(161,000)
Depreciation			-	(92,733)		(92,733)
Employer contributions paid			-		96,000	96,000
Total Resources Expended	(1,702,971)	(181,933)	(1,884,904)	(92,733)	(65,000)	(2,042,637)
Assets Purchased from GAG			-			-
Actuarial Gains			-		(236,000)	(236,000)
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	3,800	(4,472)	(672)	(66,256)	(301,000)	(367,928)
Balance at 1 September 2018	7,780	67,698	75,478	3,906,865	(380,000)	3,602,343
Balance at 31 August 2019	11,580	63,226	74,806	3,840,609	(681,000)	3,234,415

We believe this simple schedule gives a useful overview of how the trust has spent its money this year.

Restricted General Funds

In the most simple terms the trust spent 99.8% of its income during the year, leaving £11,580 to carry forward.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted income generated in the year amounted to £177,484 and expenditure was £181,933, an in year deficit of £4,449, leaving unrestricted funds carried forward of £63,226.

Fixed Asset Fund

Capital grants of £26,477 were received in the year. £7,063 of this was spent on projects. Depreciation of fixed assets amounted to £92,733. Total restricted fixed asset funds carried forward were £3,840,609.

Pension Reserve

£65,000 was paid into the LGPS during the year. The actuarial valuation increased the deficit to a carry forward of £681,000.



Summary of adjustments

Nature of Adjustment	Adjuste	d Items	Unadjusted It	ems (Factual)	Unadjusted Item	s (Judgemental)
	Increase/ (decrease) in Revenue funds £		(decrease) in	Increase/ (decrease) in Non Revenue funds £	(decrease) in	
Client Adjustments	No client adju	stments made.				
Audit Adjustments						
To post LGPS pension adjustment for the year		(301,000)				
Being difference between payroll reconciliation and staff costs within the trial balance.			(4,545)			
Total	-	(301,000)	(4,545)	-	-	-



Our Findings

Deficiencies to be brought to the attention of the Trustees

We are required to report to you in writing, significant deficiencies in the Academy's internal control environment that we have identified during the audit. These matters are limited to those which we have concluded are of sufficient importance to be reported to you. Our audit cannot necessarily be expected to disclose all matters that may be of interest to you and, as a result, the matters reported may not be the only ones which exist. As part of our work, we considered internal controls relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such that we were able to design appropriate audit procedures. This work was not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.

As required by the Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019, all findings have been given the following priority rating based on their importance as follows:

- 1 The Trustees must ensure this recommendation is addressed as a matter of priority. Where this is also a material breach of the Academies Financial Handbook, it is likely to result in a modified Regularity Report.
- 2 This may include a non-material breach of the Academies Financial Handbook or the Academy's internal financial regulations. Internal controls should be strengthened to enhance operational efficiency but action is not time critical.
- 3 Internal controls could be strengthened but there is little risk of material loss. This may be a point for future consideration as risks faced by the Trust evolve over time.
- 4 Observations and Recommendations. This point is either for information only or relates to a recommendation made last year where action has been taken and is no longer of concern.



Points raised in the 2018 management letter

2018 Findings	2018 Priority	Recommendation	2019 Position	2019 Position
Companies house was not updated with resigned Trustees.	2	Ensure companies house is updated within 14 days of any Trustee amendments.	Although the school website was not up to date, companies house was updated correctly.	Completed.



Priority 1 Findings

Price Bailey Findings	Recommendation	Academy Comments
One receipt was found to contain alcohol expenditure during the review of Charge card expenses.	Ensure no alcohol is spent from school funds to comply with the AAD/ESFA musts.	This was before a policy was implanted, no alcohol is spent from the school funds from November 2018 onwards.



Priority 2 Findings

Price Bailey Findings	Recommendation	Academy Comments
The School website was not up to date on the most up to date Governance structure.	Ensure this is updated on a timely basis to agree to companies house.	This has now been updated.
It was noted that Payroll reports are not authorised by the accounting officer before being paid.	To ensure finance regulations are following, this should be signed and dated by the accounting officer before being paid each month.	Variances are authorised, overall payroll reports will be authorised going forward.



Priority 3 Findings

Price Bailey Findings	Recommendation	Academy Comments
No findings to note.		



Priority 4 Findings – Observations and Recommendations

Price Bailey Findings	Recommendation	Academy Comments
As noted in paragraph 1.4.4 of the Financial Handbook, the ESFA have noted that their strong preference is for a majority of a Trust's Members to be independent from the Board of Trustees in order not to reduce their objectivity in exercising their powers.	You may wish to consider Member appointments to bring the Trust into line with the ESFA's preferred structure or formally document why you do not wish to do so.	
We note that your current Members to not include a majority of non-Trustees.		



Academies Financial Handbook 2019

The year to 31 August 2019 has been regulated by the 2018 Handbook. The 2019 edition came into force from 1 September 2019 and is one of the key governing documents for all academy trusts to follow. The main changes include:

- An emphasis on robust governance as advised in the DfE's Governance Handbook and its correlation to effective financial management.
- An emphasis on the importance of the Clerk to the Board in helping Trustees discharge their responsibilities and opportunities for funded professional development programmes under the new Clerking Competency Framework.
- More guidance on practical implementation of the now mandatory monthly management accounts routine. The Trust must select key financial performance indicators and measure its performance against them regularly.
- Reminding the Board that they must ensure its decisions about levels of executive pay follow a robust evidence-based process and are a reasonable and defensible reflection of the individual's role and responsibilities.

- Mandating the use of a risk register to manage risks to ensure the Trust's effective operation.
- A new requirement to send an annual internal scrutiny report to ESFA following the completion of any work undertaken by the Trust's internal auditor, peer reviewer or volunteer Trustee with appropriate experience and independence. Internal scrutiny must focus on:

evaluating the suitability of, and level of compliance with, financial and other controls. This includes assessing whether procedures are designed effectively and efficiently, and checking transactions to confirm whether agreed procedures have been followed

offering advice and insight to the board on how to address weaknesses in financial and other controls, acting as a catalyst for improvement, but without diluting management's responsibility for day to day running of the trust

ensuring all categories of risk are being adequately identified, reported and managed.

 Emphasising trusts' audited accounts must be provided to the members as well as Trustees.



Academies financial handbook 2019

For academy members, trustees, accounting officers, chief financial officers and auditors

Effective from 1 September 2019

June 2019



Baker Clause compliance

The Baker Clause was introduced last year which requires schools to publish a statement online describing their careers programmes and how providers access their pupils to talk about technical education and apprenticeships.

The government has now issued a warning that those who fail to comply could see the cancellation of a Trust's funding agreement.

Setting executive pay

To help academy trust boards set and review executive salaries, ESFA has published new guidance on setting executive pay.

The guidance aims to help boards feel confident and accountable for the decisions made regarding their executive salaries. It sets out key factors that should be used by academy trust boards when setting or reviewing executive salaries, so they're set at fair, reasonable and justified levels.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-executive-salaries-guidance-for-academy-trusts

Annual Allowance (AA) Pension Charge

Although mentioned previously we continue to be approached by senior employees in danger of triggering unexpected personal tax liabilities.

HMRC places a limit on the amount of pension savings you can build up in a tax year across all pensions before one is required to pay a tax charge, known as the Annual Allowance (AA) charge.

Pension Savings Statements should help the assessment of whether pension savings in the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) have exceeded the AA and the amount of any available "carry forward" from the previous three tax years, however these statements do not include payments into other pension arrangements e.g. AVCs and may not show the complete picture.

High income individuals are subject to a reduced (tapered) AA, something the TPS will not recognise. Failure to inform HMRC of AA breaches may loose the ability for the scheme to pay any applicable AA tax charges. Not electing for "scheme pays" could result in large tax payments funded from personal resources. Taking advice early can mitigate this.

ESFA Academies chart of accounts

Developed with the support of representatives from academy trusts and finance software suppliers, the Department for Education has introduced an academies chart of accounts.

The chart of accounts is a new standard for financial data to underpin the academies accounts return and budget forecast returns.

Whilst adopting the new chart of accounts is not mandatory, academy trusts should benefit from potential automated data transfer from their finance system to ESFA for financial returns relating to the 2019/20 financial year.

ESFA are encouraging trusts to work with their financial software suppliers to adopt the chart of accounts in September 2019. However we understand that only around 70 trusts to date have confirmed they intend using it.

Our advice is to wait until your accounting software provider offers a practical solution resulting in as little disruption to day to day operations as possible.



Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP)

Lord Agnew has long made it clear that he believes many Trusts could benefit from greater use of ICFP.

We have already carried out a number of reviews for Trusts which have raised some consistent findings.

KPI's can be fundamentally linked to each school improvement priority which will be affected by both progress related and financial related measures of success. Trusts are therefore being encouraged to develop personalised data dashboards which set out both financial and educational performance measures which help clarify how budgetary constraints affect the capacity for the school improvement. These can also help sharpen focus on acute areas of need and justify strategic decisions that may otherwise prove unpopular.

Price Bailey can assist in this process if required.

Schools Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (new)

As financial pressures continue to increase on the sector, effective resource management is vital.

Each year, Trusts will be asked to provide a self assessment of the effectiveness of resource management. This mandatory return must be submitted to the ESFA by 14 November 2019.

The dashboard shows how a school's data compares to thresholds on a range of statistics that have been identified by the Department for Education (DfE) as indicators of good resource management and outcomes. The challenge for Trustees will be to understand 'why' and then take measures to roll out the good, or tackle the bad practice.

There is no requirement for the self assessment to be externally validated but there is a chance it will in 2020. We will update our clients as we know more.

The Internal Scrutiny Report (new)

ESFA are significantly ramping up the importance being given to internal scrutiny encompassing the work of the internal scrutineer in whatever form used by a Trust.

The AFH requires the audit committee to meet at least 3 times a year and is now requiring trusts to submit an annual report, summarising the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions as presented to the audit committee by the internal scrutineer, to the ESFA by 31 December each year.

This requirement for a first annual report will be applied fully for the 2019/20 financial year. For 2018/19, as a transitional arrangement, the ESFA will accept a trusts latest report (which could be an annual report but does not have to be) for submission by 31 December 2019.



A guide for trustees/governors: understanding your data

ESFA has released updated guidance for academy Trustees and Governors covering 7 themes. It emphasises that access to high quality data is the hallmark of any successful organisation. It states that it is not about collecting more information but about collecting the right information, understanding it, discussing it and using it to inform your actions.

- 1. Pupil numbers / attendance and exclusions
- 2. Attainment and progress
- 3. Curriculum planning staff and class sizes
- 4. Financial management and governance
- Quality assurance
- 6. Safeguarding and well-being
- 7. The school community staff pupils and parents

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-

trustees?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdeli very

Urgent Capital Support fund

Multi-Academy Trusts with over 5 schools and 3,000 pupils are lucky enough to receive the School Condition Allowance (SCA) but smaller trust have to bid for access to Condition Improvement Funding. Should an urgent issue arise, funding may not be readily available if issues arise outside of the bidding season.

Thankfully there is some additional capital funding available called Urgent Capital Support (UCS) fund. This will help those schools which are left with a school estate that is not meeting statutory requirements.

The UCS is not available to those schools who have access to SCA monies. It is expected the MAT will manage these funds and provide emergency support if required.



Key Dates 2019-20





Department for Education

Academies planning calendar
A summary of key dates and actions relating to academy funding, finance and trust compliance with their funding agreement.

imance and trust compliance with their funding agreement.				
September 2019	October 2019	November 2019	December 2019	
Information and published guidance Academies Financial Handbook 2019 comes into effect	Trust action Complete autumn school census LBCT online form available from 1 October Academies must publicly consult by 31 January 2020 on proposed changes to admission arrangements for entry in September 2021, or if they have not consulted in the past 7 years Information and published guidance ESFA publishes guidance and workbook for the 2018 to 2019 academies accounts return DfE issues guidance on the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) 2020 to 2021 Audited financial statements can be submitted from 15 October ESFA publishes the 16 to 19 revenue funding allocation data for 2019 to 2020 Payment Second quarterly pupil premium payment for the 2019 to 2020 financial year Key stage 2 moderation and phonics funding payment Universal infant free school meals payment for newly eligible academies	Trust action Deadline for new CIF applicants to register on the online portal Trusts complete and submit the LBCT return by 4 November Trusts complete and submit the school resource management self-assessment tool return by 14 November Accounts return online form available from 4 November Accounts return online form available from 4 November Information and published guidance ESFA issues PE and sport premium conditions of grant and allocations for 2019 to 2020 academic year ESFA publishes the Academies Accounts Direction for 2019 to 2020 Payment Teachers pay grant for the 2019 to 2020 academic year Primary PE and sport payment for 2019 to 2020 for terms 1 and 2	Trust action Trusts submit their 2018 to 2019 audited financial statements, auditor's management letter and accounts submission coversheet by 31 December Deadline for CIF bids Announcement DfE announces schools revenue funding settlement for the next financial/academic year (2020 to 2021)	
January 2020 Trust action Complete spring school census Trusts complete and submit their audited 2018 to 2019 accounts return by 20 January Trusts publish their 2018 to 2019 audited financial statements on their website by 31 January Payment Third quarterly pupil premium payment for the 2019 to 2020 financial year	February 2020 Trust action • Academies must determine their admission arrangements for entry in September 2021 by 28 Feb • Academies must publish their admissions appeals timetable for 2020 on their website by 28 February Information and published guidance • ESFA confirms exceptional 2019 to 2020 post-16 inyear growth outcomes • ESFA issues guidance on 2020 to 2021 funding allocations for open academies • ESFA issues Year 7 catch-up premium conditions of grant and allocations for 2019 to 2020 financial year • ESFA issues 16 to 19 allocation calculation toolkits (ACT) containing funding factors and student numbers, to schools and academies	March 2020 Trust action Academies must publish their admission arrangements for entry in September 2021 on their website and send a copy to their local authority by 15 March Information and published guidance ESFA issues academy revenue funding allocations for 2020 to 2021 including 16 to 19 allocations (plus student support, 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and free meals in further education) where applicable ESFA publishes guidance and workbook for the budget forecast return outturn (BFRO) for 2020 Payment Primary PE and sport payment 2019 to 2020 for newly eligible academies Year 7 catch up grant for the 2019 to 2020 financial year Free school meals supplementary grant	April 2020 Trust action ESFA makes live the form for trusts to claim national non-domestic rates (NNDR) for the 2020 to 2021 financial year Online form for the budget forecast return outturn (BFRO) for 2020 available Information and published guidance ESFA publishes 16 to 19 funding regulations guidance and 16 to 19 funding rates and formula guidance for 2020 to 2021 ESFA publishes 16 to 19 student support eligibility and operational guidance, including 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guidance DIE publishes the CIF 2020 to 2021 outcome Payment Final quarterly pupil premium payment for the 2019 to 2020 financial year	
Trust action Complete summer school census Trusts complete and submit their BFRO for 2020 Trusts complete and submit their BFRO for 2020 Trusts must submit their audited financial statements to Companies House within 9 months of the end of the accounting period which is 31 May Information and published guidance ESFA publishes guidance and workbook for the budget forecast return three year (BFR3Y) for 2020 Payment Primary PE and sport payment 2019 to 2020 for term 3	Trust Action Budget forecast return three year (BFR3Y) for 2020 online form available Information and published guidance ESFA issues the 2020 Academies Financial Handbook ESFA publishes the 16 to 19 sub-contracting controls guidance for 2020 to 2021	July 2020 Trust action Trusts complete and submit their budget forecast return for 2020 to 2021 Information and published guidance ESFA refreshes the 16 to 19 interactive census tool DIE publishes the academies sector annual report and accounts (SARA) Payment Final payment for universal infant free school meals for the 2019 to 2020 academic year	August 2020 Information and published guidance ESFA publishes the Academies Accounts Direction for 2020 to 2021	



Twitter - @AcademyHelpdesk



Academies Helpdesk @AcademyHelpdesk · Jul 2

Confirmed the new Internal Scrutiny Report to be submitted by December won't be mandatory until 2020. This Report only confirms what you should

be doing anyway. To get an idea of the type of guestions, the School

Resource Management Self-assessment Tool should be a start point





An up to date source of information

We know that relevant updates on developments in the world of education are important to our clients. That's why we have set up our Academy Helpdesk Twitter account. We are using it to disseminate information relevant to those working in finance and governance roles in academy trusts and have already advised all of our primary contacts to follow the account. Even if you are not on Twitter, just drop us an email and we will ensure you receive an email every fortnight with the latest updates from our team.



Causeway House 1 Dane Street Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 3BT

^T +44 (0) 1279 755888

^F +44 (0) 1279 755417

^E stortford@pricebailey.co.uk